

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01

FEAE-00 AGR-20 CU-04 FAA-00 DOTE-00 DRC-01 IO-14

EUR-25 /199 W

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R 181135Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4299

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 9965

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH.

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER

1. I CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER CHAROONPHAN ON JUNE 17 TO BRIEF HIM ON DISCUSSIONS DURING MY RECENT CONSULTATION IN WASHINGTON. WE COVERED PROSPECTS FOR FOREIGN AID AS WELL AS THE OUTLOOK FOR PROGRESS ON THE VARIOUS REQUESTS THE RTG HAS MADE TO BEEF UP OUR ECONOMIC RELATIONS. ON FOREIGN AID, I NOTED THAT LONG TERM PROSPECTS WERE UNCERTAIN. SECRETARY KISSINGER AND AID ADMINISTRATOR PARKER HAD MADE STRONG CASES FOR CONTINUED AID IN TESTIMONY BEFORE THE CONGRESS, BUT WE WOULD HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE THE OUTCOME. I NOTED ALSO THAT I HAD DISCUSSED WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON THE NEW SITUATION IN THAILAND FOLLOWING THE OVERTHROW OF THE FORMER GOVERNMENT LAST OCTOBER.

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2. I TOLD THE MINISTER ALSO THAT I HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY STRUCK DURING MY STOP IN TEHRAN WITH THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN WAS SHORT ON RICE BUT WOULD HAVE \$16 BILLION ADDITIONAL IN OIL REVENUES THIS YEAR. THIS SEEMED TO OPEN SOME INTERESTING POSSIBILITIES FOR THAI RICE SALES. I NOTED ALSO THAT IRAN AND INDIA HAD "AGREED TO DISAGREE" ON THE US PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. THE SHAH HAD GONE ON RECORD IN FAVOR OF A US PRESENCE TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF THE LITTORAL NATIONS, WHILE THE INDIAN PRIME MINISTER TOOK A DIFFERENT LINE. HOWEVER, MY DISCUSSIONS WITH NON-OFFICIAL INDIANS IN NEW DELHI OPENED THE POSSIBILITY THAT EVEN INDIA MIGHT TAKE A SOMEWHAT LESS STRONG STAND ON DIEGO GARCIA FOLLOWING INDIA'S NUCLEAR EXPLOSION.

3. CHAROONPHAN SAID HE GREATLY APPRECIATED THIS INFORMATION AND WANTED TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ASSURE ME THAT THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE NEW SANYA GOVERNMENT WAS STILL BASICALLY THE SAME SINCE THE SAME PERSON IS STILL FOREIGN MINISTER. HOWEVER, CHAROONPHAN STRESSED THAT THE RTG FACES PROBLEMS AND SOME ADJUSTMENTS ARE REQUIRED TO MEET THE PRESENT SITUATION. IN THE CASE OF THE US, THIS MEANS THAILAND WILL SHIFT ITS EMPHASIS SOMEWHAT. THE LONG-STANDING THAI-US MILITARY COOPERATION REQUIRES "READJUSTMENT." WE WILL KEEP "WHAT IS NECESSARY," BUT WE MUST ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY AREAS OF MILITARY ACTIVITY.

4. CHAROONPHAN REITERATED THE POINT HE HAS MADE BEFORE THAT OUR ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP ALSO REQUIRES CHANGES. IT IS NECESSARY, HE SAID, TO STRENGTHEN THESE RELATIONS AND TO MOVE AHEAD MORE QUICKLY. WE HAVE A LONG-STANDING AGREEMENT ON ECONOMIC AID, BUT THIS REQUIRES REVISION. WE NEED TO SEE WHAT NEEDS TO BE CHANGED AND READJUST BEFORE PRESSURES GROW. (COMMENT: CHAROONPHAN DID NOT GO INTO SPECIFICS ON OUR ECONOMIC AID BILATERAL. AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED, THE THAI HAVE THIS BALL.)

5. THE STUDENTS, CHAROONPHAN SAID, ARE CRITICAL. THEY STIR UP THE PRESS AND PRODUCE EXAGGERATED REPORTING ON MATTERS SUCH AS ALLEGED DEATHS ON THE UDORN BOMBING RANGE.

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I EXPLAINED THE ACTUAL SITUATION AT THE RANGE AND THE ASSISTANCE WE HAD PROVIDED TO THE UDORN GOVERNOR AND THE RTG TO CLARIFY THIS SITUATION PUBLICLY. I TOOK THIS OCCASION TO BRIEF CHAROONPHAN ON THE NEGOTIATIONS NOW IN PROGRESS TO TURN OVER AIR AMERICA OPERATIONS TO THAI-AM, AND WE ALSO DISCUSSED THE RECENT FLURRY IN CHIANG MAI AS A RESULT OF STUDENT AGITATION AGAINST THE US SEISMIC STATION ON DOI SUTHEP.

6. PICKING UP THIS THEME CHAROONPHAN SAID THAI STUDENTS ARE HIGHLY SENSITIVE TO AND SUSPICIOUS OF THE AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE. THEY INSIST THAT THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUE ITS TALKS WITH USG REGARDING FURTHER WITHDRAWALS. CHAROONPHAN SAID HE STRESSES THAT THESE TROOPS ARE HERE BY JOINT AGREEMENT FOR OUR COMMON DEFENSE. THEY WILL NOT STAY FOREVER BUT ARE IN THAILAND "AS GUARDS" AND "TO FRIGHTEN THE OTHER SIDE." CHAROONPHAN SAID HE TELLS THE STUDENTS THAT THESE TROOPS WILL LEAVE WHEN THE SITUATION IN INDO-CHINA IS PEACEFUL. "IF I ASSURE THEM THAT YOU REALLY CONSULT WITH US RATHER THAN JUST INFORM US, THIS WILL GO A LONG WAY TO REASSURE THE STUDENTS. THIS WILL HELP BOTH OF US."

7. TURNING TO THE INDIAN OCEAN, CHAROONPHAN SAID HE IS MOST CONCERNED BY PRESS REPORTS REGARDING US RECONNAISSANCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA FROM THAI BASES. HE NEEDS TO BE IN A POSITION TO SAY THAT THE US IS FULLY CONSULTING THAILAND ON THIS AND IS DOING NOTHING FOR WHICH THAILAND HAS NOT GIVEN AGREEMENT. THE STUDENTS ASK WHY, IF THE AMERICANS ARE HERE TO BRING PEACE TO INDO-CHINA, THEY ARE FLYING OVER THE INDIAN OCEAN.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 9965

8. I TOLD CHAROONPHAN WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF PULLING TOGETHER DETAILED INFORMATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF HIS GOVERNMENT ON THE INDIAN OCEAN SITUATION. WE WILL KEEP HIM FULLY INFORMED REGARDING THE RATIONALE AND RESULTS OF THESE FLIGHTS.

9. IN REPLY TO CHAROONPHAN'S REQUEST FOR OUR VIEWS ON THE SITUATION IN LAOS AND THE KHMER REPUBLIC, I BRIEFED HIM IN GENERAL TERMS, DRAWING ON APPROPRIATE PORTIONS OF RECENT REPORTING FROM VIENTIANE AND PHNOM PENH. REGARDING LAOS, I SAID IT SEEMED TO US THAT THE PATHET LAO WERE MORE AGGRESSIVE THAN THE NON-COMMUNIST ELEMENTS BUT THAT THERE WAS NO REASON FOR DISCOURAGEMENT. MUCH DEPENDED UPON ACTIONS BY SOUVANNA PHOUMA. IN THIS CONNECTION, I SAID WE VERY MUCH WELCOMED PRESS REPORTS THAT THAILAND WAS TAKING STEPS TO IMPROVE TRANSIT FACILITIES FOR GOODS MOVING THROUGH THAILAND TO LAOS. THIS, I SAID, WOULD
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HELP REDUCE LAOS' DEPENDENCE ON HANOI.

10. CHAROONPHAN, WHO WAS FORMERLY AMBASSADOR IN VIENTIANE AND WHO FOLLOWS THE LAO SITUATION CLOSELY, SAID IT WAS HIS VIEW THAT THE COALITION GOVERNMENT WOULD WORK AS LONG AS SOUVANNA PHOUMA WAS IN CHARGE. HOWEVR, HE NOTED THAT SOUVANNA IS GETTING ON IN YEARS AND IS TIRED. THAILAND IS UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE SITUATION WHEN HE LEAVES THE SCENE. CHAROONPHAN ADDED THE INTERESTING NOTE THAT THAILAND DOES NOT BELIEVE THE PATHET LAO NOW ARE AS FANATICAL AS THEY FORMERLY WERE. IF WE FOLLOW THE RIGHT POLICY, CHAROONPHAN SAID, WE MAY BE ABLE TO WEAN THEM AWAY FROM MORE RADICAL ACTIONS AND FROM FULL RELIANCE ON HANOI. I AGREED FULLY WITH THIS ASSESSMENT AND SAID THAT EASING THEIR ACCESS TO THE FLOW OF GOODS AND SERVICES THROUGH THAILAND WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL. AS A FURTHER STEP TO SUPPORT THE NEW GOVERNMENT, CHAROONPHAN SAID THAILAND HAD ASKED ASEAN TO MAKE A STATEMENT (AND IT HAD DONE SO) WELCOMING THE PGNU AND EXPRESSING THE HOPE THAT IT WOULD SUCCEED.

11. ON THE GENERAL SUBJECT OF THAI-LAO RELATIONS, I SAID THE MEKONG COORDINATING COMMITTEE STILL HAS TO COMPLETE A FEASIBILITY STUDY ON THE RESETTLEMENT OF PEOPLE WHO WOULD BE DISPLACED BY THE PAMONG DAM. FINANCING FOR THE DAM CAN BE ARRANGED ONLY AFTER THIS FEASIBILITY STUDY IS

COMPLETED. IF THAILAND INDICATED ITS SUPPORT FOR THIS STUDY, THE PROCESS WOULD BE ACCELERATED. CHAROONPHAN TOOK THIS IN BUT MADE NO COMMENT.

12. ON CAMBODIA, THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE KHMER REPUBLIC'S PROSPECTS FOR BEING SEATED IN THE NEXT UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY. I NOTED THAT THAILAND COULD MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THIS BY LOBBYING WITH COUNTRIES WHICH WERE WAVERING. AS A NEIGHBOR OF CAMBODIA, THAILAND'S VIEWS WOULD CARRY WEIGHT WITH A NUMBER OF NATIONS.

13. DURING THE DISCUSSION, I AGAIN ASSURED CHAROONPHAN OF OUR DESIRE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH HIM AND TOLD HIM TO LET ME KNOW IF QUESTIONS AROSE REGARDING OUR MILITARY PRESENCE OR OTHER MATTERS ON WHICH WE COULD BE HELPFUL. I ASSURED
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HIM OF OUR FULL DESIRE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH HIM AND WITH MFA TO ACHIEVE OUR COMMON OBJECTIVES.

14. COMMENT. CHAROONPHAN IS A GOOD FRIEND OF THE US, BUT IT IS OBVIOUS THAT -- LIKE MANY THAI -- HE IS PULLED IN TWO DIRECTIONS. HE IS OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED BY THE SITUATIONS IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA AND THE POSSIBLE THREATS THESE POSE TO THAILAND'S OWN SECURITY. FOR THIS REASON HE WELCOMES THE US MILITARY PRESENCE. AT THE SAME TIME, HE IS SUBJECT TO STRONG STUDENT AND PRESS PRESSURES FOR MORE RAPID REDUCTIONS IN OUR FORCES AND THE ELIMINATION OF SENSITIVE ACTIVITIES. I INTEND TO KEEP THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AS WELL INFORMED AS POSSIBLE ABOUT OUR ACTIVITIES. WITH THE DEPARTURE OF THAWI AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE, WE NEED ALL THE SUPPORT WE CAN GET. IF WE REALLY LEVEL WITH HIM AND CONSULT RATHER THAN MERELY INFORM, I BELIEVE CHAROONPHAN WILL HELP US ON THE BASIC ISSUES. HE DOES, HOWEVER, WANT THE AGREED UPON STEADY REDUCTION IN OUR FORCE LEVELS, CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS REGARDING THE THREAT-FORCE LEVEL SYNDROMS, AND IS KEEPING HIS OPTIONS OPEN REGARDING THE INDIAN OCEAN. THIS UNDERSCORES OUR REQUEST (BANGKOK 9608) TO PUT MORE MEAT ON THE BONES REGARDING OUR ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES IN THAT AREA.
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